



What is the Penalty for Unbelief?

Over the last several weeks we have taken the time to discover some of what the Bible says about God, our sin, and Jesus Christ's work to save us from our sin. This next study will focus on what the Bible says is true of those who refuse to believe in Jesus. Let's turn to **John 3**.

What happens if I do not believe?

Read the following verse.

*He who believes in Him is not judged;
he who does not believe has been judged already,
because he has not believed in the name
of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 3:18

What does it say is true of someone who refuses to believe God?

He is already (right now) being judged.

How does that judgment show itself according to the following verses? (John 3:19-20)

This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

It shows itself by my unwillingness to love the Light (Jesus Christ) and by my desire to continue loving my evil deeds.

If I continue to reject Christ's forgiveness of my sins, what will God do? (John 3:36)

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.

God's face will continue to be set against me to pour out His wrath on me for my sin.

Other passages explain God's wrath in more detail. But this passage says something about it that is very sobering. It says that it is always abiding or continues to abide on anyone who does not believe.

No one can escape God's wrath

What do the other passages say? Well, for example, let's read together a story Jesus told in **Luke 16:19-31**.

What did they do with the rich man's body? (v. 22)

Buried it

Where did the rich man's spirit go? (v. 23)

Hades

Could the rich man escape the wrath of God he was experiencing? (v. 26)

No

When the rich man requested the second time that someone go back and tell his brothers, what answer did Abraham give?

If they will not listen to truth from God Word, they will refuse even to listen to a miracle like someone coming back from the dead.

Let's look at still another passage – **Matthew 7:21-27**. This is near the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is the One talking.

Who does Jesus say every man will stand before some day?

Himself (“Me”)

How will He answer those who have not showed their belief in Him by obeying Him? (v. 23)

And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who work iniquity.”

To help understand His point, Jesus gave an illustration about two men: one built his house on sand and the other on a rock. Jesus said the man who builds his house on the sand is the man who refuses to obey God by trusting in Him.

Memory Verse

*He who believes in the Son has eternal life;
but he who does not obey the Son will not see life,
but the wrath of God abides on him.*

John 3:36